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Note to the editor: You may wish to use something from the attached release--
"Half of low-salary city diets below standard, survey shows"--as the basis for
a story on more home-grown "protective" foods recommended by your staff.

Attachment--"Half of low salary city
diets below standard,
survey shows." 1287-39.

United States Department of Agriculture

For Feb. 1 papers

WASHINGTON, D. C.

HALF OF LOW SALARY CITY DIETS
BELOW STANDARD, SURVEY SHOWS

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From the standpoint of nutrition, 40 to 60 percent of family diets of white employed city workers appear to be in need of improvement and the same is true for about 60 percent of the diets for Negro families.

This finding is from an analysis by Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling and Esther F. Phipard, of the Federal Bureau of Home Economics from a study of more than 4,000 dietary records obtained in 1934-37 from families of employed wage earners and low-salaried clerical workers in cities in eight major geographical regions. Complete details of the study are available in Circular 507 just published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

At every expenditure level above a certain minimum, Doctor Stiebeling points out, some families succeeded in obtaining good diets, but others provided themselves with a diet only fair or poor from a standpoint of nutritive value. For example, with an average food expenditure of \$2.50 a person a week, which is higher than the median in all areas, 32 percent of the families in the East South Central area bought good diets, while another 37 percent obtained diets that were classed as poor.

The cost of buying diets with a wide enough margin of safety in protein, minerals, and vitamins to be rated good varied somewhat from one region to another. This study found the minimum expenditure for diets with this wide margin of safety to range from about \$1.90 a person a week for Negro families in the South to about \$2.75 a person a week for white families in North Atlantic cities.

Based on recent studies made in the Bureau, the study reveals that about one-third of the white families obtained diets high enough in vitamin A to insure good visual adaptation in semidarkness. The diets of only one-fifth of the families insured a liberal allowance of vitamin A.

The pellagra-preventive factor appears amply supplied except in the Southeast, where the deficiency in low-income groups is serious. Here it was found that not enough was spent for fresh vegetables, milk, and cheese.

For a good diet it has been suggested that as much of the food budget be spent for milk and cheese, and also for fruits and vegetables, as for eggs, lean meat, poultry and fish. The study showed that white families spent from one-fourth to one-third of their food money for eggs, lean meat, poultry and fish; from one-fifth to one-fourth for vegetables and fruits, and only one-eighth to one-sixth for milk and cheese. Negro families spent almost one-third for eggs, lean meat, poultry, and fish; about one-sixth for vegetables and fruits, and only six percent for milk.

Usual diets of these families included fewer eggs, less than two-thirds as many vegetables and fruits, and from one-half to one-third as much milk as diets graded as good. Doctor Stiebeling suggests that many present-day diets may be improved considerably in nutritive value not by spending more--but by spending more wisely.

The family records were gathered by the Cost of Living Division of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the analysis of content, cost, and nutritive adequacy of diets was made by the Bureau of Home Economics in cooperation with the Works Progress Administration. Only non-relief families with incomes of at least \$500, but not more than \$2,000 or more than \$200 for any one month, during the preceding year were included in the study. The group possibly represents a higher economic level than characterizes city wage earners as a whole, in the opinion of Doctor Stiebeling.

